

The Kingdom of God #10: Christ's Day of Vengeance (Rev. 19)

Side question – **Why should we believe that overcoming believers will be raptured before the Second Coming, and even before the Tribulation?** This will not be dealt with in depth, but in short, here are the main reasons:

1. Some scriptures speak of Christ's appearing as imminent (i.e., it could happen at any time) and we are warned to be ready so that day does not overtake us as a thief. Mt.24:36-51, Mt.25:1-1, Mk.13:35-37 Yet other scriptures describe the Second Coming in terms that would make it not so imminent (after antichrist's appearance, at the end of a seven year period of judgments called "the Tribulation", when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies)
2. There are scriptures that give us hope of escaping the Tribulation Lk. 21:34-36, 1 Thess.1:10, Rev.3:10-11
3. Because there are many scriptures that say Christ will return with his saints (and the angels). This implies that we must be taken up first, so we can participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb, and be equipped and made ready for returning with him. Zech.14:5, Col.3:4, 1 Thess. 3:13, Jude 14-15, Rev. 14:1-5, 19:14
4. I believe a proper understanding of "the manchild" in Rev. 12 supports an early rapture of overcomers

Now to the main issue. The last message dealt with the fact that Christ will return, as established by a multitude of verses throughout the NT. Now we look at an actual description.

Rev. 19: 11-21

- Christ appears from heaven on a white horse (engaging in righteous battle)
- Eyes a fire (omniscience)
- Many crowns (total victory and kingly authority)
- Vesture dipped in blood (the evidence of the redemption of the armies who are following him)
- Sword out of his mouth (omnipotent power to inflict judgments, exercised merely by speaking)
- Name written – known only within the Godhead
- Title - KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS
- Called the Word of God
 - Why not the "Lamb of God"? The title "Lamb of God" is used in association with his people, redeemed by his sacrificial blood. The "Word of God" can be positive (to us), or negative (to the ungodly). Here it speaks of the judgments coming forth directly from his mouth against the enemies of God. He who spake the universe into existence, will speak against the heathen armies and they will be destroyed.
- Accompanied by the armies of heaven ("Lord of Sabaoth") on white horses, clothed in white linen (the righteousness of the saints) – Includes both angelic hosts, and the redeemed. Somehow we will participate directly in the execution of judgment.
- Purpose/result
 - to execute war and judgment on the ungodly and deliver His people in Jerusalem
 - to "tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"
Isa. 34:1-8 - It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and recompense for the "controversy of Zion"
Isa. 63:1-6, Joel 3:2, 9-17 – both speak of the same time as Rev. 19
 - to totally defeat the Antichrist and the false prophet, and consign them to the Lake of Fire
 - to deliver the Jews in Israel and Jerusalem, and open their eyes as to who their Messiah has been all along
Zech. 12:1-14 (especially 9-10) – God will destroy the nations that come against Jerusalem, and then Israel "shall look upon me whom they have pierced", and mourn, under a spirit of grace and supplications
Zech. 14:1-7, 12-15 – all nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle. Christ returns, standing on the Mount of Olives, causing a great earthquake. The Lord comes, "and all the saints with thee".
 - To institute Christ's literal kingly reign from Jerusalem (as continued in Rev. 20)

After reading this, **why do you think it makes many Christians uneasy to think of Christ in such terms?**

1. We tend to think of Christ and God only in terms of love and mercy, as a kind shepherd. But what of the God who is a "terror" (2 Cor. 5:10-11), or a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29)? Our God is both merciful and terrible..
2. Some people think that God has changed, that the fearsome and fiery God of the OT is now meek and is inclined to just ignore sin. They see God now as an indulgent grandfather who just says "boys will be boys". But if God changes his nature, or evolves, he is no God at all.
3. People don't see sin and rebellion in the same way that God does. Those who (Rev. 19) are gathered together to fight are allied with the Antichrist, determined to destroy the people of God (the Jews in Israel and Jerusalem). They will have gone through 7 years of divine, cataclysmic judgments, and yet repeatedly it says "they repented not" (e.g., Rev. 9:20-21).
4. Sadly, many "Christians" may not be fully determined as to which side of the fence they are on. Fence-sitters and line-walkers will eventually be forced to decide whether they are in or out.